

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 2-7, 9-17, and 19-24 are pending in the application, with claims 9, 14, 19, and 24 being independent. Claims 1, 8, and 18 are canceled herein without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 2-4, 7, 9, 12-17, 19, and 22-24 are amended herein. No new matter has been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

Initially, Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that claims 9-12, 14, 19-22, and 24 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and to overcome the rejection based on 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Claims 9, 14, 19, and 24 are rewritten herein in independent form and taking into account the § 112, second paragraph, rejection, and are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance.

§ 112 Rejection

Claims 1, 7, 12, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for various informalities. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejection, claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice, and claims 7, 12, and 13 have been amended herein to attend to the informalities noted in the Office Action.

Art Rejections

Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,738,736 B1 (Bond). Claims 1-8, 13, 15-17, 23, and 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Bond in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,738,746 B1 (Bernard et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejections, and in the interest of expediting allowance of the application, claims 1, 8, and 18 have been canceled without prejudice, and the dependent claims have been amended so each depends from one of allowable claims 9, 14, 19, and 24. Accordingly, claims 2-7, 13, 15-17, 23, and 25-27 are allowable by virtue of their dependency from the respective base claim, as well as for the additional features that each recites.

CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 2-7, 9-17, and 19-24 are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections and an early notice of allowance.

If any issue remains unresolved that would prevent allowance of this case, **the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney to resolve the issue.**

Respectfully submitted,

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